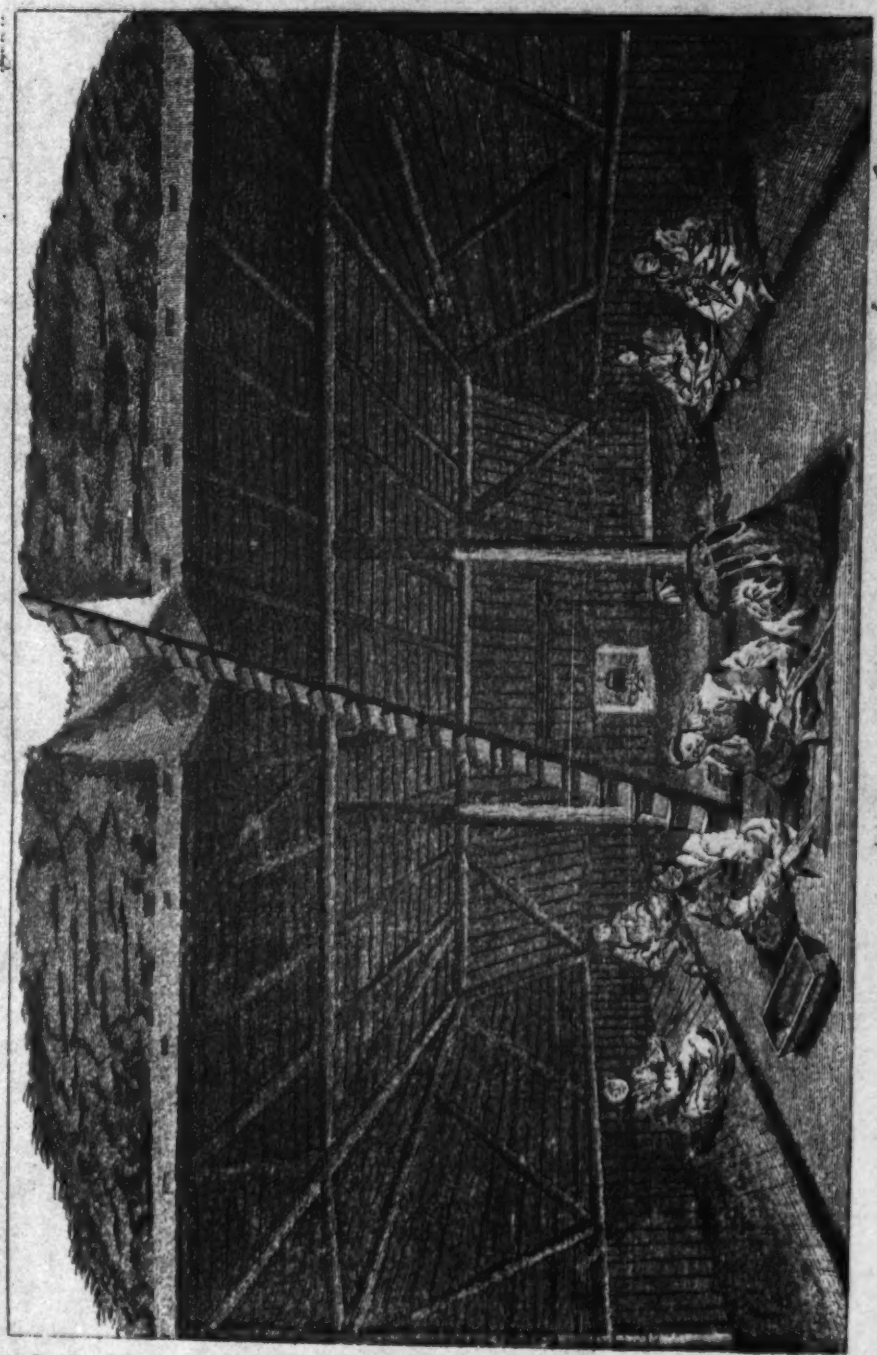

The Inside of a Winter Hut

facing p. 181

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l: Krasheninnikov N-5 (1736-40) 1764 Kamchadal

CHAP. IV

Of the OSTROGS, *or* HABITATIONS, *of the* Kamtſchadales.

UNDER the name of *Oſtrog* we underſtand every habitation conſiſting of one or more huts, which are all ſurrounded by an earthen wall or palliſadoe.

The huts are built in the following manner: they dig a hole in the earth about five feet deep, the breadth and length of which is proportioned to the number of people deſigned to live in it. In the middle of this hole they plant four thick wooden pillars; over theſe they lay balks, upon which they form their roof or cieling, leaving in the middle a ſquare opening which ſerves them for a window and chimney; this they cover with graſs and earth, ſo that the outward appearance is like a round hillock; but within they are of an oblong ſquare, and the fire-place is in one of the long ſides of the ſquare: between the pillars round the walls of their huts they make benches, upon which each family lies ſeparately; but on that ſide oppoſite to the fire, there are no benches, it being deſigned for their kitchen furniture, in which they dreſs their victuals for themſelves and dogs. In theſe huts where there are no benches, there are balks laid upon the floor, and covered with mats. They adorn the walls of their huts with mats made of graſs.

They enter their huts by ladders commonly placed near the fire hearth, ſo that when they are heating their huts the ſteps of the ladder become ſo hot, and the ſmoke ſo thick, as almoſt

1: Krasheninnikov N-5 (1736-40) 1764 Kamchadal

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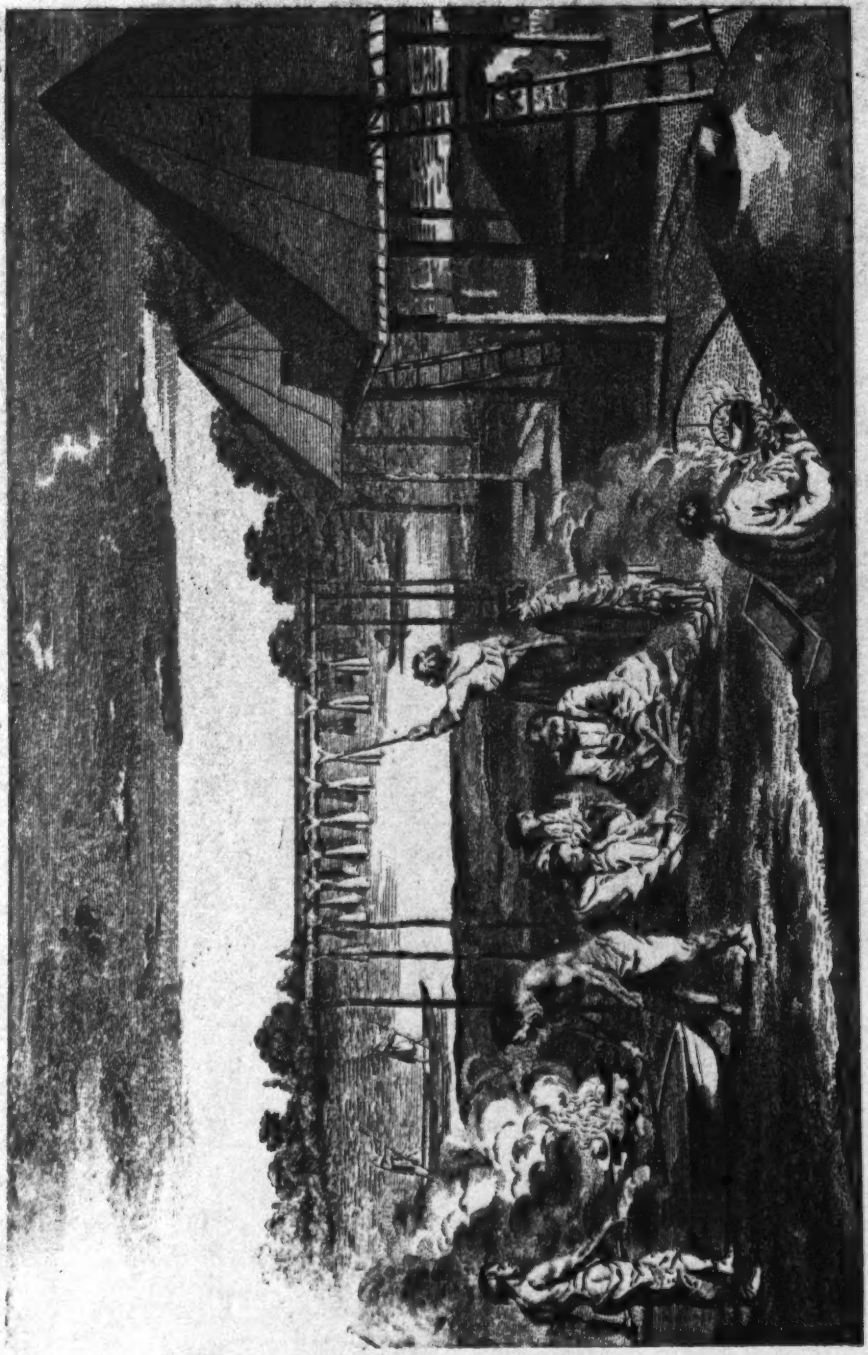

Summer Huts.

facing p. 182

1: Krasheninnikov N-5 (1736-40) 1764 Kamchadal

to ſuffocate any one who is not inured to bear it: but the natives find no difficulty in going out or in; and though they can only fix their toes on the ſteps of the ladder, they mount like ſquirrels; nor do the women heſitate to go through this ſmoke with their children upon their ſhoulders; though there is another opening through which the women are allowed to paſs; but if any man ſhould pretend to do the ſame he would be laughed at. The *Kamtſchadales* live in theſe huts all the winter, after which they go out into others which they call balagans: theſe ſerve them not only to live in during the ſummer, but alſo for magazines. They are made in the following manner: Nine pillars, about two fathom long or more, are fixed in the ground, and bound together with balks laid over them, which they cover with rods, and over all lay graſs, faſtening ſpars and a round ſharp roof at top, which they cover with bramble, and thatch with graſs. They faſten the lower ends of the ſpars to the balks with ropes and thongs, and have a door on each ſide one directly oppoſite to the other.

They have ſuch balagans, not only round their winter habitations, but alſo in thoſe places where they lay up their food in ſummer; and they are certainly very convenient in this country on account of the frequent rains, which would ſurely ſpoil all their fiſh if it was not preſerved in ſuch places; beſides, when they return from fiſhing and hunting in the harveſt, they leave their dry fiſh here, 'till they can fetch it in the winter; and this without any guard only taking away the ladders. If theſe buildings were not ſo high the wild beaſts would undoubtedly plunder them; for notwithſtanding all their precaution, the bears ſometimes climb up and force their way into their magazines, eſpecially in the harveſt when the fiſh and berries begin to grow ſcarce. In the ſummer, when they go a hunting, they have, beſides their balagans, huts made of graſs, in which they dreſs their

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal

342 of thatch, or dried graſs, placed upon long
354 poles faſtened together at the top, and bear-
511 ing upon the rafters. This is at once the
417 firſt and laſt ſtory; it forms the whole apart-
ment, or rather chamber: an opening in the roof ſerves inſtead of a chimney to let out the ſmoke, when a fire is lighted to dreſs their victuals; this cookery is performed in the middle of the room, where they eat and ſleep pell-mell together without the leaſt diſguſt or ſcruple. In theſe apartments, windows are out of the queſtion; there is merely a door, ſo low and narrow, that it will ſcarcely ſuffice to admit the light. The ſtair-caſe is worthy of the reſt of the building; it conſiſts of a beam, or rather a tree jagged in a ſlovenly manner, one end of which reſts on the ground, and the other is raiſed to the height of the floor. It is placed at the angle of the door, upon a level, with a kind of open gallery that is erected before it. This tree

retains

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal

417/576 retains its roundneſs, and preſents on one ſide ſomething like ſteps, but they are ſo incommodious that I was more than once in danger of breaking my neck. In reality, whenever this vile ladder turns under the feet of thoſe who are not accuſtomed to it, it is impoſſible to preſerve an equilibrium; a fall muſt be the conſequence, more or leſs dangerous, in proportion to the height. When they wiſh perſons to be informed that there is nobody at home, they merely turn the ſtair-caſe, with the ſteps inward.

251 Motives of convenience may have ſuggeſted to theſe people the idea of building ſuch ſtrange dwellings, which their mode of living renders neceſſary and commodious. Their principal food being dried fiſh, which is alſo the nouriſhment of their dogs, it is neceſſary, in order to dry their fiſh, and other proviſions, that they ſhould have

/333 cont./

342 175 The next Paleo-Asiatic people, the Kamchadal, lived through the winter exclusively in earth yurts at the time of Steller and Krascheninnikof. One finds a detailed description by the two travelers and in Steller there is even a plan and a view of the interior (7). Apart from minor details in its interior arrangement

342 354 [191] [113]

7. Steller, Beschr. von dem Lande Kamtschatka /Description of the Country of Kamchatka/, Frankfort and Leipzig, 1774, p. 212; Krasheninnikov", "Opis. zemli Kamchatki /A Description of Kamchatka/" Poln. sobr. uchen. putesh. po Rossii, izdav. Imp. Akad. Nauk", Vol. II, St. Petersburg, 1819, p. 37).

/334/ the Kamchadal earth-yurt showed an interesting deviation from the one of the Gilyak in that in it the outer, covered passageway leading to the door became a channel, which, with its interior opening directed toward the hearth in the middle of the yurt, served to produce a strong draft when a fire was made, but afterwards, when the fire had gone out, was closed at its outer end. According to Steller (1), only children were permitted [419]

1. Op. cit., p. 214.

to crawl in and out of the yurt through this channel (2); the smoke

[114] [192] [562]

2. According to Krascheninnikof (op. cit., p. 40), also women and kojektschutsch or kojachttschitsch (Steller, op. cit. p. 351, note), i.e., men who behaved like women on the other hand, if a man had done it, he would have exposed himself to the derision of all those present. As a consequence of garbling the Kamchadal designation for the outer opening of this channel (schoponatsch), the Russian Cossacks call it shupan.

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[364]
[417]
[101]

/334 cont./

hole directly above the hearth, from which an oblique beam with deep notches led down to the floor of the yurt, served the adults for entering and leaving. As Steller reports (3), on account of

3. Op. cit., pp. 8 and 240.

their earth yurts, the Kamchadal of the Penshini (Okhotsk) Sea were called "Namalau" or "Namalan," i.e., living in subterranean houses, by their northern neighbors, the Reindeer Koryak -- a designation from which Gerland derives the name Namollo for the Eskimo or Juĭt /Yuit/ -- as they call themselves -- who migrated back from America to the Asiatic coast of the Bering Sea (4).

114
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[113]

4. G. Gerland, "Zur Ethnogr. des äussersten Nordostens von Asien /On the Ethnography of the Extreme Northeastern Part of Asia/" (Zeitschr. der Gesell. für Erdkunde zu Berlin, Vol. XVIII, 1883, p. 221). I am not able to decide whether this derivation is justified, but in any case Gerland has completely misunderstood the above statement by Steller, in that he thinks that the Koryak designate with the first of these names (Namalau) the Kamchadal living along the Kamchatka River, and with the latter (Namalan) the Tungus, likewise because of their earth yurts. According to Steller, these names refer neither to the one nor to the other, but both alike to the Kamchadal (Italmen) along the Sea of Okhotsk (Penshini /Penzhina/). He expressly states about those living along the Kamchatka River that the Koryak call them Jutilitan, but is unable to give any reason for it (p. 8); concerning the Tungus, however -- who, by the way, have no earth yurts at all -- he notes only (p. 240) that they, in spite of their frequent raids extending to the Penshina River even before the arrival of the Russians,